

# **United States Army Sergeants Major Academy**



**Sergeants Major Course Class 54  
Student Information Handbook**



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
HEADQUARTERS, U. S. ARMY SERGEANTS MAJOR ACADEMY  
11291 SGT E. CHURCHILL STREET  
FORT BLISS, TEXAS 79918-8002

REPLY TO  
ATTENTION OF:

ATSS-C

MEMORANDUM FOR Class #54, United States Army Sergeants Major Course, Fort Bliss, Texas 79918-8002

SUBJECT: Congratulations

1. Congratulates on your selection to attend the Sergeants Major Course. Your individual accomplishments, future potential, and dedication to military service were the basis for your selection to attend the capstone of noncommissioned officer training.
2. Spouses are an essential and vital part of the academy experience. In support of spouses, we include many educational, social, and recreational activities as an integral part of the academy. Two such activities are the ULTIMA Spouses Association and the Spouse Leadership Development Course. The activities will assist you and your spouse in assuming higher levels of responsibility in your military profession; **therefore, we urge that your family accompany you and share in this unique learning experience.**
3. It is imperative that you carefully read and follow the instructions in the enclosed information handbook. It contains information about the academy, family housing, and Fort Bliss facilities that will answer most of your questions. It will also aid you and your family in settling into the academy and the Fort Bliss community. Should you have any questions or need assistance, do not hesitate to contact the Alpha Company Commander or First Sergeant. The commander's email address is: [ATSS-BAR-CDR@bliss.army.mil](mailto:ATSS-BAR-CDR@bliss.army.mil). The phone number is commercial (915) 568-8785 or DSN 978-8785. The first sergeant's email address is: [ATSS-BAR-1SG@bliss.army.mil](mailto:ATSS-BAR-1SG@bliss.army.mil). The phone number is commercial (915) 568-8508 or DSN 978-8508.
4. Again, congratulations. We look forward to your arrival and the opportunity to meet and serve with you and your family.

// original signed //  
CLIFFORD R. WEST  
Command Sergeant Major

// original signed //  
JOHN K. KIRBY  
LTC, AD  
Commandant

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## Pre-Arrival Requirements

1. **General.** This section includes information that will help you settle quickly into the academy. It contains items that require your immediate attention/action and subsequent return to USASMA. Return the requested items at least 45 days before you report in for the course. Use the checklist link to help you ensure you complete each requirement.

### 2. Education.

a. Students working toward a degree, whether in the classroom of local colleges/ universities or distance learning, may continue studies while attending the SMC. Tuesdays and Thursdays each week are set aside for the extension studies college programs. Funding and books are the student's responsibility. Tuition Assistance (TA) and VA funding are available for use. The USASMA education advisor will assist in all areas of the extension studies program.

b. Mail or fax a copy of your DA Form 2-1 (if you entered the Army before October 1981) or AARTS transcript (if you entered the Army after October 1981) to the USASMA education advisor prior to arrival. The mailing address is:

Commandant, USASMA  
Attn: ATSS-BE  
Bldg 11291, Biggs Army Air Field  
Ft. Bliss, TX 79918-8002

Email: [EDADV@bliss.army.mil](mailto:EDADV@bliss.army.mil)  
Telephone: (915) 568-8915  
FAX: (915) 568-8061  
DSN: 978-XXXX

c. Bring copies of **all college transcripts and/or degree programs** with you and present them during inprocessing. Transcripts need not be official at time of inprocessing. We cannot determine your educational needs without transcripts. Failure to provide required documentation automatically places your name on the special projects list and you will not participate in the Tuesday/Thursday extension studies program.

3. **Physical Training and Weight Control.** USASMA is at the forefront in the Army's effort to set the proper example for maintaining "fighting shape" physical fitness. Our physical training program is geared toward ensuring all students meet or exceed the Army standards for their respective age category upon arrival, and to maintain or improve upon that fitness level throughout the duration of the course.

a. Upon arrival, height and weight is checked in accordance with AR 600-9 (Army Weight Control Program). **Students who do not meet the weight standards are denied enrollment into the Sergeants Major Course (SMC).**

b. **Successful completion of all record Army Physical Fitness Tests (APFTs) is a graduation requirement.**

### c. Health Risk Assessment.

(1) The USASMA Health Promotions Office (HPO) and the cardiology service of William Beaumont Army Medical Center (WBAMC) will conduct cardiovascular risk screenings of all SMC students. We require the following items before you arrive. Mail the following documents to the HPO (see para (4) below), no later than 15 November 2003:

(a) One copy of a **current physical exam, within the last five years** (forms SF 88 and SF 93 or DD 2808 and DD 2807-1).

(2) We recommend that you hand carry your MRIs or bone scans if you will require continued care at Fort Bliss for ongoing orthopedic or neurological conditions.

(3) Mail these documents to:

Commandant, USASMA  
ATTN: ATSS-CM  
Bldg 11291, Biggs Army Air Field  
Ft. Bliss, TX 79918-8002

(5) We also recommend that you do not purchase new running shoes prior to reporting. A running shoe assessment will be completed by our physical therapist during inprocessing.

(6) Do not hesitate to contact the HPO at DSN 978-8271 or commercial (915) 568-8271 if you have any questions. You can also email the HPO at [ATSS-CH@bliss.army.mil](mailto:ATSS-CH@bliss.army.mil).

d. All students will wear the identification tag necklace during PT for safety purposes.

### 4. Administration.

a. **All soldiers incur a 24-month service obligation upon graduation from the SMC. You must extend or reenlist to meet this obligation prior to arrival.** As stated in your assignment instructions, you must fax a copy of your extension/reenlistment documentation and a signed service statement to NCOES Branch, DSN 221-4590, commercial (703) 325-4590. You should also bring a copy of the memorandum to inprocessing. A sample of this service statement follows this paragraph. Sister services personnel should check their service regulations for any obligation incurred by their attendance at this course.

Sample Service Statement Memorandum

Office Symbol

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Required Service Statement

1. In accordance with Section 3914 or 3917, Title 10, United States Code (USC), I agree to meet the service remaining requirement to attend the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy. I have been informed that voluntary retirement will not be approved until the required service is completed, either after graduation or termination of class attendance in accordance with AR 635-200, paragraph 12-9c.

2. Point of contact for this action is the undersigned at DSN: \_\_\_\_\_.

Your Name  
Your Rank, USA  
SSN

b. Due to personnel and time restrictions at this location, we **strongly** encourage you to review your records and complete and sign your PQR packet for the CSM/SGM Promotion Board prior to departing your current unit.

c. Plan your move accordingly so as not to lose any leave days. Students may take ordinary leave only during non-duty days, i.e., long weekend/holiday periods. Emergency leaves are processed at any time. **An emergency leave over 10 days may impact on your ability to complete the course.** Non-emergency leaves will be processed as ordinary leave.

d. **Soldiers holding the rank of first sergeant or command sergeant major must have lateral appointments to master sergeant or sergeant major accomplished prior to departure from their losing organization.**

e. Your assignment to USASMA is a permanent change of station. Soldiers must bring all service records, to include personnel file, finance, education, medical and dental records. Soldiers arriving with families must also bring their family member medical and dental records.

f. All Army ARNG (Title 32) and USAR (AGR) soldiers must arrive with a DA Form 31 in their possession. All other ARNG and USAR soldiers are not required to have a DA 31 completed when they depart their home station for the academy.

g. Make arrangements to have your next Leave and Earnings Statement (LES) forwarded to you at the address in paragraph h below.

h. The USASMA mailroom will accept and hold mail for you until you get a permanent address. The correct forwarding address is:

USASMA  
Bldg 11291, Biggs Army Air Field  
Ft. Bliss, TX 79918-8002

i. Some lectures presented by guest speakers during the course are classified at the **SECRET** level. Additionally, a critical requirement for promotion to Sergeant Major is for ALL Master Sergeants to possess a minimum of a **SECRET** security clearance with a security investigation conducted within the last ten years. Therefore, prior to attending the SMC, you must:

(1) **ARRIVE WITH AN UPDATED SECURITY CLEARANCE.** A minimum of SECRET access with an investigation completed within the last ten years is required of **ALL** students. Those students with an MOS requiring TOP SECRET access must have an investigation completed within the last five years. Check with your unit Security Manager regarding clearance status.

(2) Provide documentation of clearance upon arrival. Bring a copy of DA Form 873, Certificate of Clearance issued by the Central Clearance Facility, and an SF 312, Classified Information Nondisclosure Statement. If an update has recently been submitted, bring a copy of the Electronic Personnel Security Questionnaire (EPSQ) and a copy of the Defense Security Service receipt or Office of Personnel Management (OPM) receipt.

(3) Students from other branches of service must meet the same minimum access security clearance requirements as above.

(4) Contact the USASMA Security Manager regarding any questions at DSN 978-8362, commercial (915) 568-8362, email: [ATSS-BS-S2@bliss.army.mil](mailto:ATSS-BS-S2@bliss.army.mil), or at the address below:

Rank Name  
SMC Class #54

Commandant, USASMA  
ATTN: ATSS-BS

Bldg 11291, Biggs Army Air Field  
Ft. Bliss, TX 79918-8002

5. **Sponsorship Program**. This information handbook satisfies USASMA's sponsorship requirement IAW chapter 2 of AR 600-8-8. (Note: The SMC falls under Company A, USASMA. Any reference to the term "company" refers to Company A.)

a. The company commander and first sergeant are the primary points of contact for all students. All soldiers are encouraged to contact them prior to arrival.

Commandant, USASMA  
ATTN: ATSS-BA  
Bldg 11291, Biggs Army Air Field  
Ft. Bliss, TX 79918-8002

Commander: (915) 568-8785  
First Sergeant: (915) 568-8508  
DSN: 978-XXXX

Commander's email: [ATSS-BAR-CDR@bliss.army.mil](mailto:ATSS-BAR-CDR@bliss.army.mil)  
First Sergeant's email: [ATSS-BAR-1SG@bliss.army.mil](mailto:ATSS-BAR-1SG@bliss.army.mil)

b. Additionally, the USASMA Reserve Component Advisor is available to assist with specific RC issues.

Commandant, USASMA  
ATTN: ATSS-CG  
Bldg 11291, Biggs Army Air Field  
Ft. Bliss, TX 79918-8002

Telephone: (915) 568-8313  
DSN: 978-XXXX

Email: [ARNGADV@bliss.army.mil](mailto:ARNGADV@bliss.army.mil)

6. **Pets**. Fort Bliss policy restricts the number of pets allowed in family quarters to no more than three (except fish). Registration and annual rabies vaccination is required both on and off post. Fort Bliss uses the DOD system for registering animals. Contact the Fort Bliss Veterinary Activity, building 6077, Carter Road, (915) 569-2266, for further information. Their hours are Monday through Friday, 0800-1200 and 1300-1600. Soldiers who **reside off the military installation** must register their animals with the El Paso City-County Health Department. Contact the Animal Regulation and Disease Control Center, 211 Shelter Place, El Paso, Texas 79905, (915) 532-5966, for pet registration information.

7. **Weapons**. Fort Bliss policy allows storage of weapons and small quantities of ammunition in family quarters. USASMA does not have a facility to store weapons. Arrangements may be made to store weapons at the Fort Bliss MP unit, building 125, Slater Road, (915) 568-2115 (DSN 978-2115), or Fort Bliss Rod and Gun Club, building 3730, Railroad Drive and Deer, (915) 568-2983 (DSN 978-2983). All state and local laws regarding ownership, registration, and possession are the responsibility of the service member. Fort Bliss weapons

registration is conducted during inprocessing.

8. **Bicycles**. You must register all bicycles on Fort Bliss. Fort Bliss regulations require all bicycle operators to wear a helmet and have head and tail lights during limited visibility operation.

#### 9. **Uniforms**.

a. **You must bring all BASIC INITIAL ISSUE with you to the academy.** Upon arrival, you will need your Class A, Class B, IPFU and a minimum of four sets of the Battle Dress Uniform (BDU) ready to wear. Uniform for the Opening Ceremony is Class B. The normal duty uniform is the BDU. The Army PT uniform is used during PT. Other service personnel wear the appropriate equivalent uniform for their service. Some occasions require wear of the Class A uniform or equivalent uniform for other services. There are a number of social activities that require the wear of formal dress uniforms. Bring all accessories associated with your uniforms. Uniforms must reflect your current rank. You should purchase items you need from the military clothing store at your current installation because the Fort Bliss Military Clothing Sales Store is currently out of stock on many items.

b. The Fort Bliss Military Clothing Sales Store does not stock clothing for other military services.

c. Although requirements vary among the services for wear of name tags, **all students will wear name tags for identification** while at USASMA.

d. All students will require a set of casual civilian clothes (open collar shirt, slacks, no blue jeans, no sneakers or sandals) for evening guest speaker presentations and social functions.

e. Special Forces soldiers are authorized to wear the Green Beret with the unassigned flash.

10. **Household Goods**. The transportation office at your losing installation can tell you transit time for shipments to Fort Bliss. Consider this when you plan your move. You can expect some delay in delivery of your HHG due to local moving companies becoming very busy during SMC inprocessing. We recommend that you ship only those items you will actually need during your assignment here. **Use of non-temporary storage (NTS) in lieu of shipment is recommended.** (For CONUS shipments, NTS is at origin; from overseas, NTS is normally at Bayonne, NJ or Oakland, CA.) Be sure to arrange for your nontemporary storage at origin when you arrange for your other shipments. Temporary storage is authorized for a maximum of 90 days from the date the shipment arrives. You are authorized one partial delivery from your HHG shipment. Unaccompanied baggage shipments are not authorized partial deliveries unless you are in a temporary billet situation. The Fort Bliss HHG Inbound Section telephone number is DSN 978-3668/2735 or commercial (915) 568-3668/2735. Visit your local transportation office for information and assistance, especially on storage and Do-It-Yourself (DITY) move options. The transportation committee email address is [ATSS-BAR@bliss.army.mil](mailto:ATSS-BAR@bliss.army.mil).



## 11. Quarters.

a. **All accompanied students are required to apply for post housing. You must read the new housing policy located at the link.** All accompanied personnel requesting quarters must complete and sign DD Form 1746 and then mail or fax this application to DSN 978-8568 or commercial (915) 568-8568. There are a limited number of two, three, and four bedroom housing units available for SMC families. Couples without children, couples with one child, and single parents with one child are usually assigned the two bedroom units. All government housing in the student housing area is issued and assigned by USASMA; therefore, contact the company commander or first sergeant regarding housing issues. See paragraph 5 for contact information.

b. Fill out, print, **sign**, and fax or mail a DD Form 1746 (Application for Assignment to Housing) **immediately. Unsigned forms cannot be processed!** If you are deployed, contact the Company A First Sergeant. We will deal with your situation on a case-by-case basis.

c. To better familiarize you and your family with available housing units and to ease inprocessing, consider the following.

(1) Consider placing items you would not normally store within your quarters living space in nontemporary storage. **Temporary storage is available at government expense for 90 days or until the date you sign for quarters (plus allowable delivery time).** If you have questions, contact the transportation committee at the email address located in paragraph 1-9.

(2) Family quarters are unfurnished; however, they do provide a stove, a refrigerator, and a dishwasher. Family quarters have hookups for a washer and dryer. Government issued furniture **is not** available.

d. **There are NO senior enlisted bachelor quarters available for bachelors.** Bachelors, both geographical and bonafide must reside off-post at their own expense. Soldiers in this category may find it beneficial to share rent expenses with other students.

12. **Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH).** Geographical bachelors electing to leave their family at their current duty station **draw BAH at the Fort Bliss rate** IAW AR 37-104-3, Chapter 23. You may obtain current BAH rates via the Internet at <http://www.dtic.mil/perdiem/bahform.html>.

13. **Special Duty Assignment Pay (SDAP)** Program. The Department of Defense Military Pay and Allowance Committee (DOD MPAC) determined that SDAP is terminated the day prior to departing on a permanent change of station to USASMA. **It is your responsibility to ensure SDAP is terminated to prevent overpayment and unnecessary hardship when it is collected.**

14. **Local Schools Information.** All students entering district schools from OCONUS must provide evidence that they are free

of tuberculosis prior to enrollment. This evidence may be the results from a TB skin test, the results from a chest x-ray, or a written physician's statement that the student is free of any signs/symptoms of TB. Additionally, if your child is currently enrolled in the GT (gifted and talented) program at his/her school, you should bring his/her test results with you (See f below). This will speed up the process for entrance into the GT program here. Remember that you are entering at the middle of the school year, so it is important to contact school personnel as early as possible.

a. Milam Elementary School (Pre-K through 5th grade) is located in the student housing area.

Milam Elementary School (915) 587-2520  
5000 Luke St  
El Paso, TX 79908

b. Ross Middle School (6th, 7th, and 8th grades) is located in El Paso, just outside the Fort Bliss boundary. Bus transportation is provided from the student housing area.

Ross Middle School (915) 887-3060  
6101 Hughey St  
El Paso, TX 79925

c. Austin High School (9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grades) is located in El Paso. Bus transportation is provided from the student housing area.

Austin High School (915) 587-2500  
5500 Memphis St  
El Paso, TX 79903

d. The following records are required for registration.

(1) Either a birth certificate, baptismal certificate, or individual passport.

(2) Health and immunization record. Texas state law requires the following immunizations prior to admission into the Texas public school system. Contact the school your children will attend for additional information.

- Three doses polio vaccine including one received on or after the 4th birthday.
- Four doses DTP/DTaP vaccine including one received on or after the 4th birthday.
- One dose MMR vaccine received on or after the 1st birthday and one additional dose of measles vaccine (this dose may be received as part of a second MMR).
- Three doses hepatitis B vaccine.
- Two doses hepatitis A vaccine.
- Children born on or after September 2, 1994 must have one dose of varicella (chickenpox) vaccine received on or after the 1st birthday. Children born between September 2, 1988 and September 1, 1994 must show proof of either having

received 1 dose of varicella vaccine or of having previously had the varicella illness.

(3) Proof of residency (quarters assignment).

(4) Report card from school last attended.

(5) Social Security card.

e. Texas public school students must have a complete physical examination before they can compete in school athletics. We recommend that your children undergo physical examinations at your current duty station if your children plan to participate in school athletics.

f. Gifted and Talented Program: The El Paso Independent School District (EPISD) provides a Gifted and Talented (GT) educational program, funded by the Texas Department of Education, for those students that the school district identifies through testing. Recognizing the fact that other states have their own versions of the Texas GT program, the EPISD is willing to place students in the program, based on GT verification from the their previous school, in order to reduce program initiation time. For further information on the GT program, please contact the EPISD Director for the Gifted and Talented at (915) 779-4201. An official from your child's previous school must complete the EPISD GT Program Verification Form in order to admit your child into the GT Program without further placement testing.



**EL PASO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT  
GIFTED AND TALENTED**

**Gifted Program Verification Form for Transfer Students**

---

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_ EPISD Campus: \_\_\_\_\_  
Program Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
District: \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact: \_\_\_\_\_  
Program Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Grade level(s) of students served: \_\_\_\_\_  
Area(s) of giftedness served: \_\_\_\_\_

Educational setting for differentiation (check all that apply):

- \_\_\_\_\_ Within the regular classroom  
\_\_\_\_\_ Special part-time class(es) within the regular school  
\_\_\_\_\_ Special full-time class(es) within the regular school  
\_\_\_\_\_ Special part-time class(es) outside the regular school  
\_\_\_\_\_ Special full-time class(es) outside the regular school  
\_\_\_\_\_ Special school for gifted and/or talented students  
\_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Criteria used for student identification:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Authorized school official must complete and return to:

Elizabeth Montes  
Director, Gifted and Talented  
El Paso Independent School District  
6531 Boeing Drive  
El Paso, Texas 79925  
Office: (915) 779-4201  
FAX: (915) 779-8015

#### 15. Vehicle Registration.

a. Fort Bliss is a closed post. DOD vehicle registration is mandatory and enforced. Vehicle registration can be accomplished during your inprocessing.

b. All vehicles must have a safety emission inspection. Fort Bliss requires a current "safety" and Texas "emission" inspection decal before the vehicle is registered on post. Any valid state "safety" inspection is adequate for post registration purposes, but you still need a valid Texas emission inspection decal. Both "safety" and "emission" inspections are performed at facilities that conduct annual Texas vehicle inspections. The cost of the "safety" inspection is approximately \$10.50; cost of the "emissions" inspection is approximately \$13.00. There is a green registration form required for those of you who need to register your vehicle in Texas. You will receive this form once you complete the safety and emissions tests and the form will cost an additional \$1.00.

Note: Vehicle less than two years old will only be required the Texas safety inspection.

#### 16. Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) Screening.

Soldiers with family members enrolled in the EFMP program must ensure that medical records are updated prior to arrival. Upon arrival, you must proceed to the Fort Bliss Community Services Center, building 2494, Monday through Friday between 0730-1630 to register your family members. Contact the William Beaumont Army Medical Center website at <http://www.wbamc.amedd.army.mil> for additional information

concerning the Fort Bliss EFMP program.

17. Family Care Plan. Soldiers arriving at Fort Bliss as sole parents, or married to another service member and have dependent family members under the age of 18, must have a family care plan. Your family care plan must be updated during inprocessing.

#### 18. Estimated Cost Information.

a. The following list of student expenses will help you in determining your needs during the course. These are **ESTIMATES** only. **DO NOT** construe them as **FIXED** expenses. Initial class fees:

Dining-In	\$30.00
Graduation Ball	\$45.00
Class Picnic	\$10.00
Class Reception	\$10.00
TOTAL	\$95.00

b. Class fees are course related and a part of the USASMA curriculum. Your class treasurer will collect them during inprocessing.

c. There are additional optional expenses paid at the student's discretion, i.e., class ring, class book, and formal attire.

d. The class will determine the use/distribution of any money left in the curriculum fund.

## Pre-Arrival Checklist

- ☐ Mailed in a copy of DA Form 2-1 or AARTS.
  - ☐ Obtain copies of all college transcripts.
  - ☐ Meet Height and Weight Standards (AR 600-9).
  - ☐ Mailed the following documents to the HPO no later than **15 November 2003**.
    - ☐ One copy of a current physical exam, within the last five years (forms SF 88 and SF 93 or DD 2808 and DD 2807-1).
    - ☐ The electrocardiogram taken on 1 August 2001 or later.
    - ☐ Lab results dated 1 August 2001 or later for the following blood tests:
      - ☐ fasting blood glucose.
      - ☐ LIPID 5 (serum cholesterol, HDL, LDL, triglycerides, serum cholesterol/HDL ratio).
      - ☐ PSA.
  - ☐ Notified HPO about medical conditions (if applicable).
  - ☐ Hand carry to USASMA (if applicable):
    - ☐ X-Rays.
    - ☐ MRIs.
    - ☐ Bone Scans.
  - ☐ Faxed Reenlistment/Extension documentation.
  - ☐ Faxed a Signed Service Statement.
  - ☐ Reviewed PQR packet.
  - ☐ Completed and signed PQR packet.
  - ☐ Lateral Appointment of Rank (if required).
  - ☐ Hand carry Service Records.
    - ☐ Personnel File.
    - ☐ Finance (more detailed checklist in Reporting and Inprocessing section).
    - ☐ Education.
    - ☐ Medical Records.
    - ☐ Dental Records.
  - ☐ Hand carry Family Member Records.
    - ☐ Medical Records.
    - ☐ Dental Records.
  - ☐ Hand carry DA Form 31.
  - ☐ Arrange to have Leave and Earnings Statement (LES) mailed to USASMA.
  - ☐ Arrange to have mail forwarded.
  - ☐ Security Clearance.
    - ☐ Hand carry DA Form 873, Certificate of Clearance issued by the Central Clearance Facility.
- ☐ Hand carry SF 312, Classified Information Nondisclosure Statement.
  - ☐ Hand carry copy of the Electronic Personnel Security Questionnaire (EPSQ) (if update has already been submitted).
  - ☐ Copy of the Defense Security Service receipt or Office of Personnel Management (OPM) receipt (if update has already been submitted).
  - ☐ Bring uniforms with current rank insignia. **All clothing bag items are required.**
    - ☐ Class A.
    - ☐ Class B.
    - ☐ IPFU.
    - ☐ Minimum of four sets of the Battle Dress Uniform (BDU).
    - ☐ Uniform accessories (i.e., medals, badges, name tags, etc).
  - ☐ Bring appropriate civilian clothes.
  - ☐ Application for Assignment to Housing.
    - ☐ Email DD Form 1746 (NOV 90).
    - ☐ Fax DD Form 1746 (NOV 90).
  - ☐ Stop Special Duty Assignment Pay.
  - ☐ Local Schools.
    - ☐ OCONUS only. Obtain one of the following items:
      - ☐ TB skin test.
      - ☐ Results from a chest x-ray.
      - ☐ A written physician's statement that the student is free of any signs/symptoms of TB.
  - ☐ Records required for school registration.
    - ☐ Birth certificate, baptismal certificate, or individual passport.
    - ☐ Health and immunization record.
    - ☐ Proof of residency (quarters assignment).
    - ☐ Report card from school last attended.
    - ☐ Social Security card.
    - ☐ Physical Examination.
    - ☐ (Optional) Gifted & Talented Test Verification
  - ☐ Vehicle Registration.
  - ☐ EFMP Screening. Bring one copy with you and turn it in to S-1 during inprocessing.
  - ☐ Family Care Plan.
  - ☐ Estimated Cost.
  - ☐ Make guest housing reservations.

## Housing Policy

### Chapter 6

#### US Army Sergeants Major Academy (USASMA) resident Sergeant Major Course Student Assignment and Termination Policies

##### 6-1. Assignment Policy.

a. This chapter outlines policies and procedures for assignment and termination of on-post housing for resident Sergeant Major Course (SMC) students.

b. Fort Bliss does not have sufficient quarters to house all students who desire them. USASMA will select and assign five SMC students as Housing Coordinators for the SMC year to work with the Fort Bliss Housing Division on all Aero Vista Housing issues. To assign family quarters for personnel selected to attend SMC, the USASMA Housing Coordinators will use an automated student housing assignment system. The system will prioritize student family housing based on information obtained from the DD Form 1746, Sep 93, Application for Assignment to Housing.

c. SMC students will only be offered on-post housing in the Aero Vista Housing area except for those students who fall under the Special Category Students, paragraph 6-3.

d. International Students attending the SMC will be offered housing IAW AR 210-50.

e. When the spouse of a SMC student will be assigned as permanent party past the graduation date, the couple will not apply for Aero Vista housing. Application for housing may be submitted for Ft. Bliss permanent party quarters.

f. Aero Vista Housing consists of both new and old quarters. Due to the vast disparity in the quality of the new quarters versus the old quarters, and the limited number of three and four-bedroom quarters, the following assignment policies will be implemented:

(1) All students must submit a DD Form 1746 to the USASMA Housing Coordinator no later than 1 May prior to the SMC they are attending, regardless of whether they intend to live on or off post. All new Aero Vista quarters will be occupied before any students are allowed to reside off-post. If there are an insufficient number of students desiring on-post housing to adequately occupy all of the new Aero Vista Housing, mandatory assignment of housing will take effect. The lowest ranking student in each bedroom requirement category will be assigned quarters until all new Aero Vista quarters are filled.

(2) All applications received by 1 May, 2359 Mountain Time, will be processed through the automated student housing assignment system prior to 15 May. On 16 May, students will be able to confirm their housing eligibility via the Housing Coordinator web site located on the USASMA web page. Applications submitted after 1 May will be prioritized IAW this

policy after the initial automated student housing assignment system is complete. Students submitting late applications will not be offered quarters that exceed their bedroom requirement.

(3) Bedroom eligibility will be determined by AR 210-50. Additional bedrooms will not be authorized for dependents who are full time college students living away from home. NOTE: Additional bedrooms are not authorized for non-dependents.

(4) Quarters will be filled in the following order, IAW Table 3-2 AR 210-50:

- (a) New four-bedroom.
- (b) New three-bedroom.
- (c) Old four-bedroom.
- (d) Old three-bedroom.
- (e) Old two-bedroom.

(5) All students will be prioritized within their bedroom requirement in the order listed below. Quarters will then be assigned IAW paragraph 6-1f (4). Only students with a four-bedroom requirement who did not make the list for the new four-bedroom house may opt to be reprioritized on the new three-bedroom quarters list or the remaining old quarters.

- (a) Returning from dependent-restricted tours.
- (b) Pay grade.
- (c) Date of rank.
- (d) Active federal service computation.

g. Students must answer the following questions in block 21 "remarks" to allow the Housing Coordinator to assign quarters based on the priorities described in paragraph 6-1f(4) and (5).

(1) Question #1: "Bedroom requirement? This will also be based on the number of dependents listed in block 15, 'Dependents residing with me,' which must follow the guidelines detailed in paragraph 6-1f(3)."

- (a) "Four-bedroom." Only students who require four-bedrooms must answer questions #2 and #3.
- (b) "Three-bedroom."
- (c) "Two-bedroom."

(2) Question #2: "Quarters preference?"

- (a) "New."

(b) "Old."

(3) Question #3: "If I prefer the new quarters and require four-bedroom and there are no new, four-bedroom quarters available, I prefer to be reprioritized IAW paragraph 6-1f (5) on..."

(a) The new 3-bedroom quarters list.

(b) On the remaining old quarters list.

(c) I prefer to obtain off-post housing and have my name removed from the Aero Vista housing list."

h. If a student is offered a unit that meets their bedroom requirement, it will be considered an "official offer."

i. If a student with a bedroom requirement larger than four bedrooms is offered a four-bedroom unit, (the largest set of quarters in the inventory) this will also be considered an official offer of adequate housing.

j. Students will be considered adequately housed if they sign a waiver accepting a bedroom category less than their requirement.

k. If students either accept or deny an "official offer" of quarters, they will be automatically removed from the housing list. For students accepting housing, BAH will be stopped on the date of key issue.

l. The installation medical staff will evaluate requests for priority housing based on medical necessity for students. All medical based requests must be supported by full medical documentation.

m. If a student wishes to reside off-post after an official offer for quarters was made, they may contact the Fort Bliss Community Homefinding, Relocation and Referral Services (CHRRS) for off-post housing assistance.

## **6-2. Maintaining Student Waiting List After Initial Assignments.**

a. The remaining students will be prioritized for housing on the waiting list as described in paragraph 6-1f (4) and (5).

b. Students who did not complete the questions in paragraph 6-1g on the DD Form 1746 to allow the Housing Coordinator to adequately assign quarters will be contacted by the Housing Coordinator to clarify the students' request. The Housing Coordinator will attempt to contact the student only up to 1 May. If no contact was made by COB 1 May, the Housing Table of contents Coordinator will assign quarters based on the information that was provided on the DD Form 1746.

c. Any student who submits a DD Form 1746 after 1 May will be added to the appropriate bedroom requirement waiting list and prioritized by procedures outlined in paragraph 6-1.

d. Change in bedroom requirement. Students who have a change in their bedroom requirement during the SMC (e.g., documented pregnancy or adoption, etc.) to three or more bedrooms will submit a new DD Form 1746 and will be reprioritized on the waiting list IAW paragraph 6-1.

e. The waiting list will remain in effect throughout the entire SMC. Students on the waiting list will be offered quarters IAW the policies outlined below and policies outlined in paragraphs 6-1h, 6-1i, 6-1j, and 6-1k.

(1) As quarters become available during the year they will be offered to the next student on the list.

(2) When the USASMA Housing Coordinator has a unit to offer, students (or their designated representative) will be contacted at the telephone number they provide to the Housing Coordinator. If the Housing Coordinator is unable to contact the student within 48 hours, the set of quarters will be offered to the next appropriate student on the list. It is incumbent on the students to keep their phone number updated with the Housing Coordinator.

**6-3. Special Category Students.** The following are special category housing policies for students arriving or departing Fort Bliss.

a. Bona fide sponsor and geographical student bachelors will reside off post.

b. Students who will be requesting a two-year stabilization for their dependent children to complete High School will not be allowed to live in Aero Vista Housing. These students may request and compete with other soldiers for on-post housing in the 801 Housing Area.

c. Permanent party to student. Permanent party selected to attend SMC subsequent to their assignment to permanent party quarters will remain in assigned quarters during SMC.

d. Student to permanent party. Students selected to remain as permanent party at Fort Bliss or USASMA following graduation will apply for other housing or move off post. Students will clear quarters no later than 30 days after graduation. As indicated in subparagraphs below, those eligible to apply for other quarters may do so, but no earlier than their graduation day. The following policies apply:

(1) Students reassigned to USASMA or Fort Bliss who reside in Aero Vista Housing will apply for permanent party quarters or will obtain off-post quarters following graduation.

(2) Students who are awaiting assignment after graduation as CSM-designees will remain in Aero Vista Housing until they receive their assignment orders.

(3) Students who are reassigned to fill key or essential positions will be given priority placement on the waiting list.

e. Early Arrivals. Students who arrive earlier than 30 April and are returning from dependent-restricted tours or are returning from nondependent-restricted tours will follow these policies:

(1) Students arriving early from dependent-restricted tours will be offered any new or old Aero Vista quarters available in their bedroom requirement. These students have the option of turning down these quarters, residing off-post, applying for quarters along with the incoming students, and accepting the quarters offered according to the automated student housing assignment system.

(2) Students arriving early from nondependent- restricted tours will only be offered the old Aero Vista Housing upon their immediate arrival. These students also have the option described in the above paragraph.

f. Short tour. Students assigned to a dependent-restricted tour following SMC will clear quarters NLT 30 days after graduation. They may apply for permanent party quarters for their dependents, effective the day they graduated the SMC.

g. TDY en route. Students who have TDY en route in conjunction with PCS will not be authorized retention of quarters for more than 30 days after graduation.

h. Students who remain at Fort Bliss after graduation and are moving out of Aero Vista housing may be eligible to a Partial

Dislocation Allowance if they are directed to terminate student housing. This allowance will be requested through the Fort Bliss Housing Office for determination and voucher verification and processing.

#### **6-4. SMC Students' Housing Termination Policy.**

a. A normal rotation of a SMC student is one who arrives on or around the normal reporting date in July, and departs after graduation in May.

b. SMC students must clear quarters no later than 30 days after graduation from the SMC. The USASMA Student and Faculty Battalion Commander may approve requests for short-term extensions for valid reasons only.

c. The Housing Coordinator will establish 2 days in April for the Fort Bliss Housing Division to schedule quarters termination appointments. Location and dates will be published. Those students who have not received their orders by this date may come to the Housing Division later to schedule their appointments on an individual basis. Housing Office is located in building 504A.

d. SMC students will follow all maintenance, occupation, and termination policies and procedures IAW AR 210-50 and this publication, USAADACENFB PAM 210-50.

## Reporting and Inprocessing

1. Reporting and inprocessing at USASMA is a relatively quick and painless experience. Inprocessing takes place in the academy area, under control of the company commander. If you respond to items in the pre-arrival section, you and your family will experience minimal delays upon arrival. You must review information in this section and prepare those items that will assist you and the academy during your inprocessing phase.

### 2. Reporting.

a. Although the last report date is 5 January 2004, you are **highly encouraged** to arrive prior to 15 December 2003 for inprocessing and family support issues. The course starts on 12 January 2004; therefore you should be settled in by 9 January 2004. Plan to arrive during normal duty hours. Arriving earlier than your reporting date could result in TLE expiration prior to assignment of quarters.

b. Report to the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy on Biggs Army Airfield: during duty hours, building 11293, room 607; after duty hours, building 11291, SDNCO. If you arrive after duty hours or on the weekend, ensure you sign in with the SDNCO. TLE **does not** start until you have signed in. The SDNCO will give you specific instructions when you sign in.

c. Students **must** check with the Fort Bliss Inn for billeting or receive a statement of non-availability until they receive assignment to government quarters. Contact the Fort Bliss Inn, (915) 565-7777, early to make reservations. The Fort Bliss Inn does not accept pets. The Armed Services YMCA Residence Inn (915) 562-8461, is located in close proximity to Fort Bliss and allows pets.

d. Accompanied soldiers **will not** be granted permissive TDY from this command for the purpose of house hunting since government quarters are available upon signing in.

e. Soldiers must be granted permissive TDY from the losing station. Upon arrival at Fort Bliss, **report to the Fort Bliss Inn to begin the TDY period**. Permissive TDY will terminate the day you sign into the academy. Once you have signed into USASMA all leave requests will be inprocessed though the Company A orderly room.

f. Sister services personnel. Sign in at USASMA first. You will be given specific instructions on inprocessing your finance and personnel records.

(1) Air Force records are maintained at:

Holloman AFB  
Central Base Personnel Office DSN867-7373/7506  
Accounting and Finance Office Finance DSN 867-7016  
49th Mission Support Squadron  
Alamogordo, NM 88330

(2) Navy records are maintained at PSD, El Centro, CA. All coordination will be made through:

El Paso Navy Reserve Center (915) 565-3993  
4810 Pollard Street  
El Paso, TX 79930

(3) Coast Guard records are maintained by the individual.

3. **Inprocessing**. The inprocessing system is designed to prepare the students for classes. It includes settling the family. The process takes several days to complete. The procedure varies from one soldier to another, but generally follows this schedule:

a. Students report daily to building 11292 (east auditorium) no later than 0745, Monday through Friday, for the inprocessing briefing. Uniform is the Army physical fitness uniform, NO spandex shorts due to on-going taping. Bring all records and documents needed to inprocess to this briefing.

b. Day 1: Report in wearing the IPFU (no spandex) for weigh in. Sign in (DA Form 31 and personnel file needed). The Registrar will then enroll you into the course. Accompanied soldiers are assigned quarters, if available. Unaccompanied soldiers receive guidance from bachelor housing. Check status of shipments at the transportation station. Process through the mailroom and pick up any mail that may have been received. Supply issues unit patches and crests. Receive appointment schedule for Days 2, 3, and 4.

c. Days 2, 3, and 4 include POV, bicycle, and weapons registration; medical records screening; personnel and finance processing; and tours of the learning resource center, computer lab, and NCO museum.

d. The remainder of the inprocessing schedule is to receive transportation shipments, settle family in quarters and school, education center inprocessing, and daily formations to disseminate information.

e. Do not bring your family members to inprocessing with you. There will be a spouse orientation conducted during the week of 12 January 2004.

4. **Finance Inprocessing**. Use this checklist while inprocessing for military pay and travel pay. This checklist identifies necessary documentation for updating your military pay account and processing your travel settlement.

a. **Military Pay**. Arrival packet to change ADSN to 4824 (Fort Bliss).

- ☐ 1 Copy of Original PCS Orders
- ☐ 1 Copy of Amended Orders (if applicable)
- ☐ 1 Copy of Assignment Orders (if applicable)



☐ 1 Original SF 1199, Direct Deposit if changing financial institution

☐ 1 DD Form 1561, Family Separation (if applicable)

b. **Basic Allowance For Housing (BAH)**. Effective 1 January 1998, recertification of BAH is required upon arrival at new permanent duty station (PDS). **Failure to recertify by end of month of arrival may result in loss of allowance. Retroactive payments are prohibited unless soldier's command can justify in writing a valid reason for the delay.**

- ☐ 1 Original DA Form 5960, Authorization to Start, Stop, or Change BAH (One for each action if starting and stopping allowance)
- ☐ 1 Copy of Termination of Quarters (if applicable)
- ☐ 1 Copy of Assignment of Quarters (if applicable)
- ☐ 1 Copy of Marriage Certificate, Birth Certificate(s), Divorce Decree(s), Adoption Documents (as applicable) (these documents are required for initial start or change to previous certification)

c. Advance Pay Packet. No itemization of expenses is required on first request. Second requests must have Part II, blocks 7, 8 and 9 and Part V, blocks 15 through 22 completed. Reminder, itemized expenses must be extraordinary expenses directly associated with the PCS move. **FAILURE TO ITEMIZE EXPENSES WILL RESULT IN DISAPPROVAL OF REQUEST.**

- ☐ 1 Original DD Form 2560, Advance Pay Certification/Authorization
- ☐ 1 Copy of Original PCS Orders and Amendments
- ☐ 1 Set DA Form 2142, Pay Inquiry if submitted through the PAC

\*\* Remember to change your savings bond(s) address if necessary.

\*\* Certain Special Duty Pay terminates upon departure of old PDS. Notify your PAC if you continue to receive an unauthorized entitlement or allowance.

\*\* Activate your MyPay Personal Identification Number (PIN) and pull your LESSs off the internet.

d. Travel Pay. PCS Travel Settlement Packet.

- ☐ 1 Original DD Form 1351-2, Travel Voucher
- ☐ 1 Copy of Original PCS Orders and Amendments
- ☐ 1 Copy of Assignment Orders (if applicable)
- ☐ 1 Original DA Form 31, Leave Request
- ☐ 1 Original Airline, Rail or Bus Ticket (if applicable)
- ☐ 1 Copy of Advance Travel Payment
- ☐ 1 Copy of DA Form 4187 or 31 for Permissive TDY (if applicable) (Must Have CNA # by Fort Bliss Inn)
- ☐ 1 Copy of DA Form 4184 or 31 or Memo Signed by Recruiting Station Commander for HRAP (if applicable)
- ☐ 1 Original Receipts for Reimbursables Over \$75.00
- ☐ 1 Copy of DD Form 788 for POV Pickup (if applicable)

e. POV Pickup Travel Settlement Packet (if submitted separately).

- ☐ 1 Original DD Form 1351-2, Travel Voucher
- ☐ 1 Copy of Original PCS Orders and Amendments
- ☐ 1 Copy of DD Form 788
- ☐ 1 Copy of PCS Travel Settlement Voucher Previously Submitted

f. Do-It-Yourself (DITY) Move Travel Settlement Packet. You will need to submit two complete sets for this payment. This travel claim is separate from your PCS settlement claim.

- ☐ 1 Original DD Form 1351-2, Travel Voucher
- ☐ 1 Copy of Original PCS Orders and Amendments
- ☐ 1 Copy of Assignment Orders (if applicable)
- ☐ 1 Proof of Registration(s) for POV(s), Boat(s) or Trailer(s) (if applicable)
- ☐ 1 Copy of Advance DITY Travel Payment Voucher (if applicable)
- ☐ 1 Original DD Form 2278, DITY Move and Counseling Checklist
- ☐ 1 Original Empty Weight Tickets
- ☐ 1 Original Loaded Weight Tickets
- ☐ 1 Copy of Truck Rental Contract

g. Temporary Lodging Expense (TLE). Maximum payable is 10 days NTE \$180.00 per day. Not payable on first or last PCS move.

- ☐ 1 Original Lodging Receipt(s)
- ☐ 1 TLE Certification Statement
- ☐ 1 Copy of Original PCS Orders and Amendments
- ☐ 1 Certificate of Non-Availability Number Issued by Fort Bliss Inn
- ☐ 1 Copy of PCS Travel Settlement Voucher

h. Temporary Lodging Allowance (TLA) **(for Overseas Locations Only)**.

- ☐ 1 Original Lodging Receipt(s)
- ☐ 1 Statement to Substantiate Payment of TLA Issued by Housing
- ☐ 1 TLA Certification Statement
- ☐ 1 Copy of Original PCS Orders and Amendments
- ☐ 1 Copy of PCS Travel Settlement Voucher

i. After completion of inprocessing, subsequent packets must be submitted through your servicing PAC on a unit transmittal memorandum. Ensure your name and SSN is on all documents and dated correctly. Keep copies of everything you turn in.

**\*\*NOTE:** Historically, finance problems may take months to resolve. You should have sufficient funds to cover yourself in the event you experience a delay in receiving any military and/or travel pay reimbursement.

## Supplemental Information for Sister Services

1. **General.** All students must meet the weight standards outlined in Army Regulation 600-9 or the body fat percentage for their age in order to graduate. **Students who arrive and cannot meet the weight standards are denied enrollment into the Sergeants Major Course.**

### 2. **Army Standards for Maximum Allowable Percent Body Fat.**

Age Group	17-20	21-27	28-39	40+
Male (% of body fat)	20	22	24	26
Female (% of body fat)	30	32	34	36

### 3. **Screening Table Weight.**

Height (inches)	Male Age					Female Age			
	17-20	21-27	28-39	40+		17-20	21-27	28-39	40+
58	-----	-----	-----	-----		109	112	115	119
59	-----	-----	-----	-----		113	116	119	123
60	132	136	139	141		116	120	123	127
61	136	140	144	146		120	124	127	131
62	141	144	148	150		125	129	132	137
63	145	149	153	155		129	133	137	141
64	150	154	158	160		133	137	141	145
65	155	159	163	165		137	141	145	149
66	160	163	168	170		141	146	150	154
67	165	169	174	176		145	149	154	159
68	170	174	179	181		150	154	159	164
69	175	179	184	186		154	158	163	168
70	180	185	189	192		159	163	168	173
71	185	189	194	197		163	167	172	177
72	190	195	200	203		167	172	177	183
73	195	200	205	208		172	177	182	188
74	201	206	211	214		178	183	189	194
75	206	212	217	220		183	188	194	200
76	212	217	223	226		189	194	200	206
77	218	223	229	232		193	199	205	211
78	223	229	235	238		198	204	210	216
79	229	235	241	244		203	209	215	222
80	234	240	247	250		208	214	220	227

4. **Sister Service Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) Requirement.** Sister Services will take the APFT as per Department of the Army message DAMO-TR, dated 1 April 1995, entitled Army Physical Fitness and Height/Weight Requirements During NCOES Courses.

5. **Profiles.** Personnel arriving at USASMA with a temporary profile will not take the APFT until the temporary profile expires. We will test personnel on permanent profile within the limits of their profile. Students must pass the APFT within the nine-month time frame in order to graduate. Profiles that go beyond the graduation date or permanent profiles that preclude taking an aerobic event will result in the student being declared a non-graduate.

6. **The APFT.** The APFT consists of three events. An individual must score 60 points in each event to pass the test. Paragraph 7-7 lists the minimum and maximum repetitions/times for each event. In order to score 60 points in each event, an individual must meet the minimum repetitions/times listed.

## 7. APFT Minimum Standards.

Event/Age Group	17-21	22-26	27-31	32-36	37-41	42-46	47-51	52-56
<b>Female 2-mile run</b>								
Maximum	15:36	15:36	15:48	15:54	17:00	17:24	17:36	19:00
Minimum	18:54	19:36	20:30	21:42	22:42	23:42	24:00	24:24
<b>Female sit-up</b>								
Maximum	78	80	82	76	76	72	66	66
Minimum	53	50	45	42	38	32	30	28
<b>Female push-up</b>								
Maximum	42	46	50	45	40	37	34	31
Minimum	19	17	17	15	13	12	10	09
<b>Male 2-mile run</b>								
Maximum	13:00	13:00	13:18	13:18	13:36	14:06	14:24	14:42
Minimum	15:54	16:36	17:00	17:42	18:18	18:42	19:30	19:48
<b>Male sit-up</b>								
Maximum	78	80	82	76	76	72	66	66
Minimum	53	50	45	42	38	32	30	28
<b>Male push-up</b>								
Maximum	71	75	77	75	73	66	59	56
Minimum	42	40	39	36	34	30	25	20
Age Group	17-21	22-26	27-31	32-36	37-41	42-46	47-51	52-56

## Alternate tests

Event/Age Group	17-21	22-26	27-31	32-36	37-41	42-46	47-51	52-56
<b>800-yard swim</b>								
Male	20:00	20:30	21:00	21:30	22:00	22:30	23:00	24:00
Female	21:00	21:30	22:00	22:30	23:00	23:30	24:00	25:00
<b>6.2-mile bike (stationary &amp; track)</b>								
Male	24:00	24:30	25:00	25:30	26:00	27:00	28:00	30:00
Female	25:00	25:30	26:00	26:30	27:00	28:00	30:00	32:00
<b>2.5-mile walk</b>								
Male	34:00	34:30	35:00	35:30	36:00	36:30	37:00	37:30
Female	37:00	37:30	38:00	38:30	39:00	39:30	40:00	40:30

## Supplemental Information for International Military Students

1. **Military Department Training Overview.** Your Security Assistance Officer (SAO) will provide you with the location and overview of the training you can expect to receive while attending the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy (USASMA). You will also find valuable information on your Invitational Travel Order (ITO).

2. **International Military Student Office (IMSO).** Once you arrive at USASMA, the IMSO is your single point of contact for issues related to training. There are only three personnel in the IMSO. If you have any problems or complaints, please keep them informed. They can help you decipher and understand various rules and regulations relating to life at USASMA and in the United States (US). We encourage you to contact the IMSO when your superiors officially notify you that you will be training at USASMA. You may contact us by any of the means below:

a. Telephone/Email

Chief, International Fellows Program	(915) 568-9055 (Office) (915) 490-1786 (Cell)
Manager, Informational Program	(915) 568-8763 (Office) (915) 821-5727 (Cell)
Staff Duty Officer (SDO)	(915) 568-8081
Facsimile	(915) 568-9662
Email	<a href="mailto:IMSO@bliss.army.mil">IMSO@bliss.army.mil</a>

b. Mail:

Commandant, USASMA  
Attn: IMSO  
Bldg 11291, Biggs Army Air Field  
Ft. Bliss, Texas 79918-8002

3. **Passport and Visas.**

a. To enter the US, you are required to have a passport and visa. Your country pays for and issues your passport and visa. If your country does not pay for the visa, you will have to pay for it. You must obtain your visa and a visa for each dependent authorized on your ITO who will travel with you to the US, from the Consular section of the US Embassy in your country. Your SAO can assist you and your dependents in obtaining the necessary visa(s).

b. **Do not come to the US with a single entry visa!** We strongly recommend a multiple entry visa. This will enable you to leave the US during your stay. This is particularly important if you need to return to your country during class or holiday breaks, to tend to an emergency or even a death in the family. This is also important if you plan to travel into Canada or take day trips with fellow classmates into Mexico located just across the border from Fort Bliss and El Paso, Texas.

c. You must ensure that the period covered on your visa covers you and your authorized dependents for all of your training or leave time taken after you complete the Sergeants

Major Course (SMC) before returning to your country. We recommend that your visa be valid for at least three months after completion of training.

d. An immigration official will stamp your passport or ITO with an entry permit. Please do not misplace this entry permit. In order to receive an entry permit, you must present your International Certificate of Immunization to a health or immigrations official.

4. **Travel.**

a. When making travel arrangements, we recommend your country issue you an open-ended ticket. This will reduce the number of changes that you need to make to your travel arrangements if your training, graduation, or return date changes. You may also decide to attend additional training while in the US or take leave in the US after completing USASMA.

b. If you travel at US government expense, the US Government (USG) arranges your trip and tickets. If the USG arranges your trip and tickets, they are restricted to utilizing US airline carriers. All return travel at USG expense will be contracted at the most economical rate; must be an American carrier if possible; and will be the most direct route back to your country. The USG cannot accommodate individual variations for personal benefit. If dependent travel is not paid for by the USG, then you will be responsible for all return flight arrangements for your dependents to include purchasing their tickets. This may prevent your dependents from traveling back on the same flight with you.

c. Your initial travel to the US will most likely take you directly to your first training installation. This will be either Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas if you are scheduled to train at the Defense Language Institution (DLI), or directly to Fort Bliss in El Paso, Texas where you will train at USASMA. If you bring your authorized dependents at a later time, they may not be able to travel to and from the US on the same airlines as yourself.

d. **Notify IMSO of Arrival Information.** Your SAO must provide advance notification to the IMSO of your arrival. The SAO must contact the IMSO by telephone at (915) 568-9055 or (915) 568-8763, by facsimile at (915) 568-9662, or by e-mail at [IMSO@bliss.army.mil](mailto:IMSO@bliss.army.mil). The SAO must provide the International Military Student's (IMS) name; number, ages, and names of your authorized dependents; and arrival information. Arrival information must include all the airlines' names, their flight numbers, and the time and date of arrival at the El Paso International Airport. The SAO should also e-mail or mail the IMSO a small digital photo of you, the IMS, and your authorized dependents (if possible). This will enable the IMSO representative or sponsor to more quickly identify you and your authorized dependents at the airport. Timely and accurate information will assist the IMSO in locating you and your dependents in the event of a delay within the US.

e. Ensure that you are aware of your country's requirements or restrictions on travel and stopovers to and from your training. Be aware that some foreign governments require "transit" visas to land at airports in their country. SAOs and you should check before planning travel through certain foreign airports.

## 5. Baggage (or Luggage).

a. **Marking Baggage.** Please mark your baggage with the address of the training location you are flying to, and place a copy of your ITO inside each piece of baggage, to include your carry-on bags. This will help the airlines ship your baggage to you if they misroute or misplace one or more pieces of your baggage.

b. **US Customs Check.** You must physically clear each piece of your baggage with the first US Customs checkpoint you process through when entering the US. Failure to do so will result in your baggage being confiscated for clearance. This may result in your not getting your baggage back for a couple of weeks.

c. **Forbidden Items.** Naturally, there are some items that are either forbidden or require special permission to enter the US. One of the most important limitations is on firearms. We strongly encourage you to leave your firearms at home. You will need to obtain special permission from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, through the Consular section at the US Embassy, to import a firearm into the US. This process may take months. Firearms are subject to confiscation in airports and must be stored according to very specific regulations when you reside on a military installation. You are also subject to all Federal, State, County, and Local laws concerning firearms once you possess one. Check the laws before buying or possessing a firearm in the US. Also check your country laws to ensure you are able to import firearms back to your country. Additionally, you must check with the training installation for storage requirements. Illegal importation or possession of firearms is a serious matter.

d. **Prescription medication.** It is very important when carrying some prescription medicines into the US that you have a written copy of the prescription for each type of controlled drug you carry into the country. Medicines available to you without a prescription may be controlled by US law, and subject to confiscation in the US. These include, but are not limited to bottles of pills for blood pressure medications, pain pills, sleep aids, diet pills, antibiotics and anti-malarial medications.

e. **SAO Responsibilities.** Your SAO will provide a list of items that cannot enter the US, or that you must import in limited quantities, written in both your language, and English.

## 6. Arrival and Reporting.

a. In order to guarantee that you arrive in a timely manner, there is a report date listed on your ITO with each line of training. Pay attention to the "Special Conditions and Remarks" portion of the ITO. It may direct that you arrive early, especially

to the first training installation. Reporting earlier than the date specified may cause administrative or housing problems, while a late report may prevent your entry into training. Even if you have a military liaison stationed at Fort Bliss, Texas, you must report to the IMSO first, not the liaison officer.

b. **Class 54 Dates.** The following dates will assist the SAO and you in preparing for travel to and arrival at USASMA:

International course	Pre- Status	Sergeants Major Course (SMC)
24 November 2003	Report Dates	N/A
24 Nov – 5 Dec 2003	Inprocessing	N/A
8 December 2003	Start	11 January 2004
9 January 2004	Graduation	30 June 2004

c. **Reporting.** You will need to report at least two weeks before the start of the International Precourse (IPC), especially if you are bringing authorized dependents. We prefer that you arrive during duty hours (0700 to 1700) on weekdays, Monday through Friday. However, with proper notification from your SAO or yourself, we can accommodate any arrival time outside normal duty hours.

d. **Inprocessing.** It is important that you have plenty of time to complete all inprocessing requirements before the start of the IPC. Your inprocessing requirements include but are not limited to applying for a temporary social security number; obtaining a military identification card; completing a medical examination; hunting for and selecting housing; connecting utilities such as electricity, gas, water, telephone, and television cable; buying or renting furniture; procuring medical insurance for your dependents; immunizing and registering your dependent children in schools; locating and purchasing or renting an automobile; studying for and taking a driver's license examination; obtaining vehicle and safety inspections and insurance; licensing your vehicle; and registering your vehicle on Fort Bliss, Texas.

e. **Arriving by Automobile.** If you arrive by automobile, you need to report to either the IMSO during duty hours (0700 to 1700) or the Staff Duty Officer (SDO) after duty hours in building 11291 of the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy in the vicinity of Sergeants Major Boulevard located on Biggs Army Air Field, Fort Bliss, Texas.

f. **Arriving by Air.** Most of you will arrive by air at the El Paso International Airport. An IMSO representative or sponsor will meet you at the airport. If your flight changes enroute to El Paso, Texas, please call and notify either the IMSO at (915) 568-9055 or (915) 568-8763 or the Staff Duty Officer (SDO) at (915) 568-8081. This will enable us to meet you and any authorized dependents at your new arrival time. Please keep these two very important telephone numbers with your passport and ITO so you can get to them when you need them.

7. **Clothing.** Even in El Paso, Texas, a southern city in the US, we have extreme weather changes. Our temperatures can exceed 100°F or 38°C in the summer and reach a low of 15°F or -10°C in the winter with an average high temperature of 76.8°F or 25°C

and an average low temperature of 50.6°F or 10°C. Therefore, you must have adequate clothing. You may purchase clothing at the military clothing sales or post-exchange (PX) stores located on Fort Bliss, Texas. However, you may not wear US military insignia, unless properly awarded. You should bring:

a. Six complete summer or equivalent utility uniforms, and two complete winter uniforms, including appropriate footwear. The US Army wears the Battle Dress Uniform (BDU) during training or duty hours (0600 to 1700). You will conduct training in your military uniform that is similar to that of our duty uniform, unless you are required to wear civilian clothing.

b. Intermediate dress uniform (known in the US military as Class B uniform) with both short and long sleeve (if available), including appropriate footwear. You will wear this uniform once a month during promotion and award ceremonies.

c. Class A or formal dress uniform with tie or bowtie (if it is part of your uniform) or other appropriate dress uniform and appropriate footwear. You will wear this uniform when attending mandatory formal military functions such as the dining-in and graduation ball.

d. All authorized awards and decorations.

e. You may wear your county's prescribed physical fitness uniform. The US Army Physical Fitness Uniform (APFU) worn during physical training is the Army black and gray uniform comprised of shorts, T-shirt, sweat pants, sweat shirt, black gloves and a black stocking cap, dependent upon the weather. We recommend you bring at least two physical fitness uniforms and one or two pairs of good running shoes. Again, we have cold weather, so ensure you bring appropriate cold-weather physical fitness uniforms to include gloves and stocking caps. If your country does not have a prescribed physical fitness uniform, you may purchase the APFU at the military clothing and sales store on Fort Bliss, Texas. The approximate price for one set of APFU's is \$170.00.

f. A military and civilian raincoat.

g. A military and civilian winter topcoat or jacket.

h. At least one pair of cold weather gloves.

i. Civilian clothing of your choice. However, you must bring some dress clothes and appropriate footwear for special events to include a sports jacket. You must also bring a suit.

j. Underclothes. You will also need to bring underwear, socks, caps, or other headgear, and any clothing or uniform items that you may not be able to obtain easily in the US. This is particularly important with regard to any and all military clothing items, awards, and decorations.

8. **Money.** US money is based on a system of one hundred. The smallest unit of money is a penny (1 cent) or 1/100th (cent) of a dollar. The nickel (5 cents) is 5/100th of a dollar. The dime (10

cents) is 10/100th of a dollar. This is followed by the quarter, which is 25 cents. Not frequently used are half dollars, which are 50 cents. Larger denominations of US money are in the form of paper bills. These come in 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 50 and 100 dollar denominations. There are two variations of each bill, and both are still valid currencies. The SAO will tell you the current exchange rate between your currency and the US dollar.

## 9. **Finances.**

a. While you are traveling it is not a good idea to carry large amounts of "cash" or regular money. Traveler's checks are the best alternative and may be refunded if lost or stolen. Keep a separate list of the traveler's check serial numbers in the event they must be replaced. Any of the three banks on Fort Bliss can convert traveler's checks to cash. Since the international banking system requires that all certified or cashier's checks clear the bank, which can take up to 15 days, we recommend against using certified or cashier's checks.

b. Bring sufficient money to cover your expenses during the first 30 days. A student arriving with two or three authorized dependents should have at least \$900.00 available to meet initial expenses for billeting and food. Please consider bringing the balance of funds needed to set up your household and transportation requirements in Traveler's Checks. You will need enough money for transportation, the initial month of rent for a home or apartment, rental furniture, vehicle cost, household items, and various security deposits for rent, utilities, and other services, if necessary. Depending on you and your dependents' needs, this total can reach \$4,000 to \$7,000 in traveler's checks.

c. In order to avoid cash transactions, we strongly encourage and will assist you in establishing a checking account locally. There are three banks where you may open checking accounts on Fort Bliss, Texas. Most people in the US use their checking accounts to pay bills by either postal or electronic mail. Students drawing a living allowance through the IMET Funding Program are required to open a bank account as all payments are paid electronically.

## 10. **Taxes/Tax Free.**

a. Unless you use only military facilities for shopping, you will pay taxes on most items purchased off the military installation. The price of the items on the shelf does not include the tax, which is currently 8.25 percent in El Paso, Texas.

b. Using military facilities provides you with tax-free merchandise. While you will pay a surcharge when using the military commissary, this surcharge is not a tax. This tax-free exemption is a privilege reserved for military personnel and their dependents. These purchases are for personal use or consumption only. There are penalties associated with the unauthorized transfer of tax-free goods to others, especially alcohol and tobacco.

## 11. **Vouchers.**

a. Ask for and obtain a certificate of non-availability every time the USG does not provide either quarters or dining facilities. Keep all of your receipts and copies of bills for use in filing travel vouchers and living allowance claims. These receipts should include all methods of travel or transportation used.

b. Retain copies of all travel vouchers. These are used to make payments against your orders. If you travel on any tours organized by the USG, separate orders will not be issued. The resulting travel voucher or living allowance voucher will be filed against the funding on your ITO. You must keep a copy of your most recent vouchers when leaving one duty station to provide to the finance officer at your next duty station. Your last duty station may not be able to furnish this information to you if it is misplaced. Failure to provide vouchers may result in an interruption of your living allowance. Your government may require you to present a copy of all vouchers from your entire stay in the US upon your return to your country.

## **12. Billeting and Housing.**

a. Naturally, you and your authorized dependents will need a place to live. Authorized dependents listed on your ITO may accompany you; however, all costs associated with family travel and living allowances in the US will be at either your or your country's expense. After the SAO or you notify the IMSO of your flight information, we will immediately reserve temporary guest billeting for you and your authorized dependents for at least seven days at either the Fort Bliss Inn until either USG housing becomes available or you secure housing off the military installation on your own. A family of four (two adults and two children) staying at the Fort Bliss Inn will pay a daily rate of \$48.00. A single adult staying in Bachelor Enlisted Quarters (BEQ) will pay a daily rate of \$29.00.

b. If guest billeting is not available on Fort Bliss, the IMSO will reserve temporary billeting off post. The daily rate for comparable accommodations off post will be approximately \$60.00 to \$100.00 per day for a family of four or \$60.00 for a single adult. Therefore, it is very important that the SAO or you contact the IMSO as soon as possible so we can beat the rush of reservations other SMC students will be making as their arrival nears.

c. Accompanied IMS. Upon your arrival to El Paso, an IMSO representative or sponsor will assist you and your family in locating permanent housing to live in during your seven-month stay at USASMA. Most students living off post live in apartments within 5 to 15 minutes of Biggs Army Air Field and Fort Bliss. While there are a few furnished apartments located off post, most apartments, like military housing, are unfurnished. Therefore, you will have to rent furniture either from a civilian or military furniture rental store. Rental furniture will cost approximately \$75.00 to \$400.00 depending on your needs, living style, and desires. Most apartments will come equipped with a stove or range, refrigerator, and a dishwasher. Rent for a two-bedroom apartment varies from \$400.00 to \$700.00, and \$600.00 to \$800.00 for a three-bedroom apartment or home. In most cases, after selecting an apartment or home, you will have

to pay the first and possibly the last month's rent as a deposit before moving in. Whichever housing you choose, you must not contract for it without first clearing the contract with the IMSO.

d. Unaccompanied IMS. If you report to USASMA as a single student or initially arrive without your authorized dependents, you will reside in the BEQ located just across the street from USASMA on Biggs Army Air Field. Your furnished room will consist of a private bathroom, double size bed, triple dresser, small microwave, small refrigerator, cable television, and a telephone. There are no cooking facilities in either the BEQ room or building. There are clothes washers and dryers on one of the three floors within the building for your use. Daily maid service is included in the \$29.00 daily rate that you will pay to the Fort Bliss Inn or that we will take directly from your US State Department sponsored living allowance.

e. Unaccompanied students can be authorized to move off post. However, all IMS must procure reliable transportation before the IMSO can grant any student the authorization to live off post.

13. **Utilities.** If you live in BEQ, you will not pay for any utilities. If you live in USG housing, you will only have to pay for your cable television and telephone.

a. **Electricity, Gas, and Water.** You may have to contact the local utility company and set up a date to have your electricity turned on after paying your initial security deposit. However, some property managers will either turn on or arrange to have your utilities turned on for you. In most cases, you do not have to be at your apartment to have these utilities turned on. The average monthly utility costs are \$25.00 to \$80.00 for electricity; \$10.00 to \$30.00 for gas; and \$25.00 to \$45.00 for water.

b. **Cable Television.** You will have to contact the local cable company to set up a time and date for a technician to come to your home or apartment to connect your television or digital cable service. You will need to be present during this installation. Depending on what you like to watch for sports and entertainment, your cable bill can be as low as \$8.00 or as high as \$100.00 or more each month. Satellite dish service is also available at a slightly higher cost. We also recommend you look into installing a cable connection to your computer for much faster Internet connections.

c. **Telephone.** You will have to contact a local telephone company of your choice to set up a time and date for a technician to come to your home or apartment to connect your telephone. In most cases, you will not need to be present during this installation procedure. You will need to review several long distance plans to select the best long distance carrier for you and your family here or back home in your own country.

14. **Dining Facilities.** While there are no dining facilities on Biggs Army Air Field, we have a small snack bar at USASMA that prepares several hot breakfast combinations and various hot and cold sandwiches during lunch. There are a couple of dining facilities located on Fort Bliss that charge \$1.60 for breakfast and



\$3.20 each for lunch and dinner. The Centennial Noncommissioned Officer (NCO) Club near USASMA on Biggs Army Air Field offers only lunch at a price of \$5.00 to \$8.00. There is also a dining facility at the William Beaumont Army Medical Center (WBAMC) where they charge by the item.

15. **Transportation.** Other than during the initial stages of your inprocessing, we at USASMA do not provide transportation to and from Fort Bliss. There is no public transportation at USASMA or on Biggs Army Air Field. There is also very limited public transportation in El Paso, Texas.

16. **Vehicle.**

a. There are many requirements associated with owning and operating a vehicle in the US. If you are accompanied by authorized dependents, you will need to purchase or rent an automobile while training at USASMA. You can purchase a used automobile for approximately \$2,000.00 to \$5,000.00 depending on you and your authorized dependents' individual needs and tastes. You must have a driver's license to operate the type of vehicle you choose for personal transportation. The vehicle must be insured and registered as noted below.

b. **Country & International Driver's License.** Prior to arrival in the US, you should obtain a country and international driver's license for the type of vehicle you anticipate driving in the US. These licenses will allow you to rent a vehicle. Most insurance companies will accept an international driver's license, but prefer a US state-issued license. Therefore, you will need to take and pass any one of the 50 State driver's license to operate a vehicle in the State of Texas. Once you have taken and passed a State driver's license, you will need to properly register and insure any vehicle you purchase for you and or your dependent's personal use.

c. **State of Texas Driver's License.** Most insurance companies require a State of Texas driver's license before issuing vehicle insurance. A State of Texas driver's license examination costs \$24.00. It consists of three parts: a written examination, an eye or vision test, and a driving test. Once you pass the examination, your license is valid for four years. The other states will honor or allow you to operate a vehicle with a license issued by one of the other states in the US.

d. **Insurance.** Insurance for vehicles is expensive. It is illegal to operate a vehicle without insurance on Fort Bliss or in the State of Texas. You must purchase property damage and liability insurance in all states. The State of Texas requires automobile liability insurance in minimum amounts of \$20,000/ \$40,000 public liability and \$15,000 property damage. Your insurance will cost you approximately \$60.00 to \$100.00 per month. You will be able to obtain insurance from a number of local insurance companies in the El Paso area. If you finance a vehicle on a loan, your lender may require you to purchase additional insurance.

e. **Inspections and Registration.** You must have a driver's license, proof of insurance, and a state safety inspection before you can register and license a vehicle in the State of Texas and

on Fort Bliss. Once you show proof that you have these documents, you will receive a State of Texas license plate. You will then register your vehicle on Fort Bliss, Texas at the vehicle registration office who will give you military installation stickers that you will place on your vehicle windshield. These military installation stickers will then allow for easier access onto a military installation.

f. **Motorcycles.** If you choose to operate a motorcycle while attending training at Fort Bliss, Texas, you will have to follow additional requirements for training and safety equipment mandated by both the military installation and state licensing authorities.

17. **Dependents.** If you are authorized dependents, your ITO will say so in the "Conditions" block, under "Dependents". Civilian housing is usually expensive for short-term lease or rental property. Non-government housing may have difficulties and expenses associated with it that are not found with government housing. These may include utility deposits and other expenses for services that your government does not normally charge you for, such as electricity, gas, telephone, television, or water and waste removal services. Additionally, your training schedule, including reporting and travel dates will not be modified to accommodate special requirements of your dependents.

18. **Civilian Employment.** In accordance with the Joint Security Assistance Training (JSAT) Regulation any employment by you or your dependents is strictly prohibited. A N2/A2 visa does not permit you to seek employment while you are in the Security Assistance Training Program. You are not authorized off-duty employment, as it will interfere with your duties.

19. **Medical.**

a. William Beaumont Army Medical Center (WBAMC) is a general hospital that offers a full range of medical services. Authorized dependents may seek medical treatment on a space available basis. Students needing medical treatment will use the Health Promotion Office located at USASMA before being referred to the Consolidated Troop Medical Clinic during duty hours while at Fort Bliss. You may seek medical attention at WBAMC for scheduled medical appointments, after duty hours, and for emergencies.

b. Medical care in the US is very expensive. If you are going to remain in the US for more than two months, we strongly encouraged you to purchase medical insurance for you and your authorized dependents. There are three types of medical funding provided for you and your authorized dependents. Due to the fact that you are a student on a temporary visa and do not plan to reside in the US, you and your authorized dependents are not eligible for any federal or state funded medical care. In the event that you require medical care, you will need to find the medical funding authorization information on your ITO and furnish it to the medical care facility when you report for medical attention. The ITO will show your medical funding authorization under "Conditions/ Medical Services".

## 20. Mail or Postal Services.

a. The US mailing system is relatively efficient. It is faster to send key documents electronically or by facsimile. International mail and deliveries are subject to customs regulations, and require addresses in English. Non-government services such as Federal Express and United Parcel Service allow you to track packages from their origin to their destination. These two services will also allow you to ship excess items home after you conclude your training.

b. Students living either on or off post will be able to use a mailbox at USASMA where you can send and receive mail. If you want a mailbox before leaving your country, please contact the IMSO who will obtain one for you. You can use the following address before your arrival at USASMA:

Your Rank and Name  
SMC - Class #54  
USASMA  
BLDG 11291, Biggs Army Air Field  
Ft. Bliss, TX 79918-8002

21. Standards of Conduct. You are here as a representative of your country. Your actions, both on and off duty, affect your country. Naturally, you will want your actions to bring credit to you and your country. Standards that apply to your International and American counterparts in training will also apply to you. These may include off-limits establishments where the local military commander has directed that soldiers do not use or enter certain facilities. Local travel limitations, policies on financial responsibility, military courtesy, and duty hours will also apply to you. Rules will also pertain to professional appearance and grooming. Acts that bring discredit upon you, or your country, may cause your withdrawal from training and an early return to your country.

## 22. Military Courtesy and Status.

a. As a representative to the US, you will want to observe all common military courtesies. Please familiarize yourself with the US rank structures. It is common for members of all services to be on virtually every training installation, so this knowledge may be quite useful. Identify your rank equivalent and salute officers. You will be treated in the same manner as your rank equivalent in US services, with the same privileges and responsibilities. The US military is subject to the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ or military law) as well as civilian authority. While in the US, you will be subject to the military rules of your country, along with US local, state, and federal civil and criminal laws.

b. You and your authorized dependents will be issued a military identification card. A further military benefit is membership in various clubs and athletic facilities associated with training installations. Membership may be free, or at a small monthly cost. Membership in these clubs allows you to meet and interact with all kinds of people, besides those you train with.

23. Student/Instructor Relationship. One relationship that falls

outside the bounds of normal military courtesy is your relationship to classroom instructors. At USASMA, we have both military and civilian instructors (who are retired Sergeants Major) who are both male and female. Regardless of their military/civilian status, rank, or sex, they are in charge of their class, even if teaching more senior enlisted members. They will be addressed as Sergeant Major, Mister, or Miss (Name). Since all students attending the SMC are considered to be at the same level, rank immaterial, they will be addressed by their first name only. It is very important that you understand this policy before attending this course. While this special form of military etiquette is sometimes hard to accept, every student will adhere to this policy. Because of this, breaches of military etiquette or disregard for an instructor will be reported to your IMSO.

## 24. Cultural Differences.

a. US culture is different from many nations in the world as it places most achievements and responsibilities on individuals, not groups. This makes some of the things Americans do seem strange. Most religions are represented in major areas of the US. The US is largely Christian. Your IMSO will be able to tell you where the nearest house of worship for your religion is located. Unfortunately, your training schedule does not always allow for religious observations, such as prayer times, or days off. With the large number of international military students in US training programs, it is not feasible to accommodate all religions.

b. If you are going to use the military dining facilities on Fort Bliss or at WBAMC, it is acceptable to request meals that comply with dietary prohibitions. However, you must use the dining facility that offers this service to you. We will not be able to authorize an increase in your living allowance if we are unable to meet your dietary concerns.

c. Americans tend to value independent decision-making more than group consensus. This means that decisions are sometimes made without consulting all personnel affected by a decision. In the interest of making a decision quickly, sometimes the majority of the people involved in a decision agrees to make a decision and do not necessarily include all people in the minority. Everyone still follows the decision on a concept of "majority rule".

d. This is the basis for the US political system, which is a constitutional, republican, representative democracy. This may be difficult for people from community-based cultures to accept initially. Military decision-making is even less democratic, with officers in charge frequently making decisions for the good of their entire commands.

25. International Precourse (IPC). After spending approximately two weeks inprocessing, you will attend a four-week IPC that will prepare you for the nine-month SMC. The IPC includes introductions, a tour of the facilities, explanation of the command structure and organization, a synopsis of what to expect during the SMC, classes in US Army writing, briefing techniques, military doctrine and operations, U.S. culture, history, and local and federal government, just to list a few.

26. **Informational Program.** Part of your study in the US will include participating in the Department of Defense Informational Program. The purpose of this program is to provide you with a balanced understanding of the US that includes our institutions and culture. This program will be done in conjunction with your academic studies from the IPC through the SMC. It will include trips to a variety of locations all designed to expose you to the various facets of the US political, economic, social, military, and cultural ways of life. This will also include an assignment of a military mentor and possibly a civilian host family who will help you adjust to our country and provide opportunities for you to become acquainted with our society. The USASMA IMSO will coordinate this program. Your participation in this program may also be included in your final academic report.

27. **Training Policies.**

a. **Attendance.** You will attend class on a daily basis as reflected on the training schedule. You are considered unexcused if your faculty advisor does not previously excuse you. You must keep your faculty advisor informed of all of your absences. Reasons for excused absences include an authorized military obligation, sick call, or a valid emergency.

b. **Physical Fitness Training Requirement.** You are required to participate in the physical fitness training program as part of the SMC program of instruction. While you are highly encouraged to take and pass the U.S. Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT), passing the APFT is not one of your graduation requirements. USASMA conducts physical fitness training three times a week, on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Some international military students experience difficulty doing “push-ups”. A goal for most age groups should be 42 to 72 push-ups in two minutes. You should also be able to run two miles nonstop. We strongly recommend that you begin your program early to best prepare yourself.

c. **Country Briefing.** In addition to the SMC requirements, you must prepare and present a 40 to 50 minute country briefing to the SMC student body. While some of you will be required to present your country briefing as early as September, everyone must complete the preparation of their country briefing by the

first day in December. After the first of December, the IMS may be given seven days notice to present their briefing in place of a guest speaker who cancels. The briefing includes but is not limited to your country’s history, people, political system, culture, customs, tradition, music, recreation, entertainment, and military status. You should consider bringing or advance mailing materials that could assist with your presentation. These materials can be videos, tapes of music, clothing, costumes, national flag, or anything else you would like to share about your country.

d. **Religious and National Holidays.** USASMA will authorize you to observe two religious or national holidays specified by your country. However, you are solely responsible for all classes and assignments missed.

e. **Medical and Physical Examination.** You will report to Fort Bliss, Texas with a complete medical examination in English. Additionally, if you are over 40 years of age, you must have a copy of a current EKG and a Lipid 2-profile. A Lipid 2-profile is a measurement of high fat content in the blood system such as cholesterol and triglycerides that are major causes of heart disease. If you report with no medical or physical examination you will have to complete them during your inprocessing.

f. **ECL.** Some of you will be required to pass an ECL in your own country before reporting to the US. However, some of you, along with others are still required take an ECL within 72 hours after reporting to Fort Bliss, Texas. There are no waivers for this requirement.

g. **Graduation Requirements.** You will receive a USASMA graduation diploma only after you have met the established training standards. You must score a minimum of 70% on all examinations. Other determining factors include aptitude, application, practical effort, and demonstrated understanding of the course material covered.

## 28. Checklist.

**a. Complete the following prior to arriving at USASMA:**

- ☐ Attain an English Comprehension Level of 80%.
- ☐ Start a vigorous physical fitness training program.

**b. Complete and mail the following required forms to the USASMA IMSO as soon as possible:**

- ☐ DD Form 1396-1 (Student Biography)
- ☐ Photo of you and your authorized dependents.
- ☐ Flight information (Airlines names, flight numbers, times and dates)

**c. Obtain and bring the following with you to USASMA:**

- ☐ Sufficient funds for travel and the first 30 days of initial expenses.
- ☐ Visa and passport for you and your authorized dependents.
- ☐ Country and international driver's license.

- ☐ Telephone numbers and addresses of family or friends to contact in case of an emergency while you are at USASMA.
- ☐ A complete medical and physical examination.
- ☐ Your International Immunization Certificate.
- ☐ Your authorized dependents' International Immunization Certificates.
- ☐ Your authorized (children) dependents' school records.
- ☐ Physical fitness training, duty, informal and formal dress uniforms.
- ☐ Civilian informal (casual) and dress clothing to include sports jacket and suit with tie and appropriate footwear.
- ☐ Country briefing materials to include costumes, videos, music, or anything else that would assist you with your country briefing.

## **Spouse Welcome Letter**

Dear Sergeants Major Course Class 54 Spouses,

On behalf of all the spouses and family members of our permanent party here at USASMA, I want to welcome you and let you know we are here to help.

As your spouse pre-registers for the class, he/she will be asked to let us know if you are going to accompany him/her to USASMA. They will be asked to furnish us with an address, telephone number and/or email address so we can make personal contact with you to fill you in on the activities that will be offered for the spouses and other family members. If you do not hear from us, please email us at [ATSS-FRG@bliss.army.mil](mailto:ATSS-FRG@bliss.army.mil). This way we can try to help get answers for you if you have any questions.

Moving can be hard on everyone and we want to let you know that if there is anything we can do here before your move to help make the transition easier, please let us know. We want your stay here at the academy to be fun and enjoyable. Remember that we are here to help.

Sincerely,

Shirley West  
FRG Advisor

## History of USASMA

### 1. [USASMA History](#).

Established in late 1971, the Noncommissioned Officer Education System (NCOES) consists of four progressive levels of instruction (primary, basic, advanced, and senior). The design of each level is to prepare noncommissioned officers (NCOs) for positions of increasing responsibility compatible with their career development and grade progression. The U.S. Army [Sergeants Major Course](#) represents the capstone of the NCOES. It is the pinnacle of formal military schooling for the noncommissioned officer.

The United States Army Sergeants Major Academy (USASMA), established on 1 July 1972, began instruction in January 1973. Our curriculum design broadens the student's already acquired knowledge as differentiated from MOS related training accomplished at the basic and advanced levels of NCOES. The prime educational technique employed throughout the course is the small group participatory learning process.

USASMA maintains operational control over the [United States Army First Sergeant Course](#) (FSC). Master sergeants, first sergeants, and sergeants first class promotable selected to attend by their major command (MACOM) comprise each class of the FSC. This three-week program trains students in the finer points of performing present or future duties as a first sergeant. The FSC came into existence in October 1981, graduating over 900 students per year since inception.

In January 1991, USASMA began instruction in the [Battle Staff Noncommissioned Officer Course](#) (BSNCOC), effectively combining the POIs of the former Operations and Intelligence Course and the Personnel and Logistics Course into a four-week integrated program.

USASMA became the proponent for developing common leader training for all [Advanced Noncommissioned Officer Courses](#) (ANCOC) in June 1981. The common leader training for ANCOC covers five major subject areas: (1) leadership, (2) communications, (3) training management, (4) professional skills, and (5) military studies. Further efforts at the academy to standardize NCO training resulted in the addition of a new [Primary Leadership Development Course](#) (PLDC). This course is a blend of the previous Primary Leadership Course (PLC) and the Primary Noncommissioned Officer Course (PNCOC) into one course to better serve combat, combat support, and combat service support personnel at the junior NCO level.

USASMA developed the common leader training for all [Basic NCO](#) (BNCOC) courses and has been the proponent since 1984 for reserve component leader training for the FSC, ANCOC, [BNCOC](#), and PLDC.

In 1989, USASMA began conducting the [Command Sergeant Major Course](#) (CSMC). The CSMC is a one-week TDY course designed to give newly assigned command sergeants major (CSM) and CSM designees some of the knowledge needed to

make the transition to the CSM position more easily. The 42.5 hours of instruction cover leader transition, training management, sponsorship, assigning and utilizing soldiers, boards, retention, the NCOER system, quality of life, and unit readiness. The training focus is on the commander/CSM relationship and the duties of the CSM in assisting the commander in training the unit to the mission. The course instructors are current CSMs brought in from the field. All personnel who are going to assume a position as a CSM are required to attend the course.

### 2. [Coat of Arms](#).

#### CREST

The torch, in dark blue, established as the national color in army regulations of 1821, indicates zeal and together with the book, signifies conveyance of knowledge and instruction in techniques required for professional leadership. The sword and quill represent both the combat and administrative services from which USASMA draws students.

#### SHIELD

Army green and yellow and the embowed chevrons associate with the basic device of an NCO insignia of grade. Gold chain links refer to the role of the sergeant major as a link between the soldier and his/her commander. The star, which signifies command, also indicates the high qualifications required of senior NCOs for attendance at USASMA. The laurel wreath, signifying past meritorious performance required for selection, and the star and chevrons are all emblems suggested by the highest insignia of grade for the NCO.

#### MOTTO

"ULTIMA" (The Ultimate) is the USASMA motto and signifies that USASMA is the ultimate in noncommissioned officer education and dedicated to preparing senior NCOs for the ultimate in enlisted assignments throughout the defense establishment. CSM Arnold E. Orr, then Command Sergeant Major of the United States Army Armor Center, Fort Knox, Kentucky, conceived the motto in July 1972.

3. [Shoulder Sleeve Insignia](#). The insignia consists of a gold colored torch with scarlet flame imposed on a shield of army green. The stem of the torch is surmounted by a gold 5-pointed star within an open, gold laurel wreath. The shield is symbolic of confidence, boldness, and protection. The wreath and star simulate the grade insignia associated with that of command sergeant major. The star is emblematic of guidance and the laurel wreath of achievement and merit. The torch symbolizes leadership, education, and training; the flame alludes to zeal and action. The color army green alludes to the all-army purpose of USASMA. The army green is also symbolic of faithfulness and obedience.